

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH175		
Name of Service:	Snugglemuffins Montessori LTD		
Address of Service:	9 Moyrath View, Kildalkey, Navan, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	C15 YY76		
Name of Registered Provider:	Maeve McMahon		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	05/11/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM 6
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
Inspection undertaken by:	D.Murray		
Title:	Early Years Inspector		
Authority to Inspect			
The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).			
Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable		

Description of service

Snugglemuffins Montessori Ltd provides a sessional service to children from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The service is situated in Kildalkey village and consists of 1 care rooms with an additional room for messy indoor play, sanitary facilities and an outdoor space to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 1 staff member. Both staff were present on the day of inspection.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re-occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Additional Information

On the 05/11/25 the service was operating outside its registration status as the registered sessional hours were from 09:30am to 12:20pm, the service was operating part time hours from 09:30am to 2pm. A referral was made to national registration office in relation to operating outside registration status.

An Immediate Action Notice was also issued on the day of inspection regarding Regulation 23 Safety and 26 Fire Safety Measures. A response was received on the 06/11/2025 which was accepted by the Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff member and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) On the morning of the inspection the service was operating outside of its registration status. The service is registered to operate a sessional service with operating hours from 09:30am to 12:20pm, however the service was found to be operating part time service hours from 09:30am to 2pm. A referral was made to national registration office in relation to operating outside registration status.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service is now operating from 09:30am to 12:20pm each weekday. The registered provider will inform the Inspectorate if she intends to make any changes to the operations of the service 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Supporting documentation submitted

Children's sign in register .

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (2) Two staff files were reviewed.
- (a)(b) Two validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 2 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Not applicable as no staff member had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Two childcare staff had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
- (6) (a) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)&(b) Two written references were not available for 1 staff member either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(a)&(b) Two written references are now on file for the staff member. The registered provider will ensure that each staff members file is kept up to date with all necessary information available for inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

Two written references.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) Present on the day of inspection was the registered provider and 1 staff member providing care and education to 11 children ranging in age from 2 years to 4 years 8 months.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service.*
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.*
 - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child.*

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The following was not included in the children's Admission Form:
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service.
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
 - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The Admission Form has been updated. The registered provider will ensure that all information is recorded on the Admission Form for each child.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated Admission Form.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- The service embraced outdoor play and learning with the children observed enjoying outdoor play with their peers.
- Children's individual needs were well supported during snack time and when going to the toilet with gentle reminders regarding hand washing.
- Children were observed engaging in tabletop activities, art and crafts and free play with children afforded the opportunity to choose and change activities if they so wish.

Supporting relationships around children:

- At snack time jovial conversation was heard between the staff and children which created a positive atmosphere for developing relationships especially for the new children.
- The staff encouraged the children to engage positively with each other by adopting simple social skills such as turn taking, sharing in play activities and resolving minor disputes.
- Transitions were handled smoothly with the children been given adequate time to complete one activity before starting the next.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) There were no observations documented on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

- There were no documented individual care plans available to support a child with additional needs who was involved with an outside agency.
- There were no observations conducted on the children to assess the progress of the children and to identify learning needs.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Care plans are now available to support children with additional needs.

Observations have been updated on each child.

The registered provider will ensure that care plans are available where required and that observations are conducted on each child on a regular basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Care plan/Observation folder.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances, however this practice will be reviewed at the next inspection. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.
- (2) A registered provider-
- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or
- shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Within the care room there were soft furnishings available should a children need to take a break from activities and rest.

(2)(a) The surface area of the outdoor space included soft tiled and a cement area and was enclosed with walls.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The play resources in the care room were accessible, organised and stored on shelving which allowed the children to select and replace materials.
- Equipment in the outdoor area included sand pits, slides, scooters, rocker, small goal post and balls, tractor and a trailer. Additional play equipment was stored in shed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The children brought their own healthy lunch from home which they had at 11am and at 12:45pm. The lunches consisted of fruit, sandwiches and yogurts.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

The following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The following safety measures were not in place on the day of inspection:

1. Two staff members garda vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'
2. A heater on the wall in the children's sanitary area within reach of children had a surface temperature of 58.8°C which posing a burns risk.
3. The tenants in the rented accommodation upstairs had direct access to the service outdoor space as the bolt was positioned on their side of the gate.
4. There was no outdoor risk assessment conducted on a daily basis. As the service is located in a village with adjoining gardens, a daily outdoor risk assessment would be required to ensure no hazardous items were thrown into the outdoor area.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were not in place on the day of inspection:

5. There were no aprons or gloves available for nappy changing which posed a cross-contamination risk.
6. There were no documented cleaning schedules available.
7. All bin in the service were swing bins which had to be opened by hand. All bins for contaminated waste must have a tight lid and be foot pedal operated.
8. Children's lunches containing perishable items were stored in the children school bags and were not refrigerated.

Administration of Medication:

The following administration of medication measures were not in place on the day of inspection:

9. There was no prior consent from parents for the administration of antipyretic medication although this practice was stated in the Medication Policy.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were not in place on the day of inspection:

10. There was no evidence available to indicate that fire drills had been carried out on a monthly basis to ensure that staff and children were familiar with evacuation procedures. The last documented fire drill was on 09/01/2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Application has been made for the 2 garda vetting disclosures.
2. The heater has been raised on the wall in the children's sanitary facilities out of reach of children.
3. A coded lock has been placed on the gate.
4. Outdoor Risk Assessment are now conducted on a regular basis.

Infection Control:

5. Aprons and gloves have been ordered.
6. Cleaning schedules are now completed on a daily basis.
7. A swing bin is now available.
8. Children's lunches which contain perishable items are now stored in a fridge

Administration of Medication:

9. Consent for antipyretic medication has now been included on the children's Admission Form.

Fire Safety:

10. Fire drills are now conducted on a monthly basis.

The registered provider will conduct regular risk assessments/audit to ensure the following:

- Infection control measures are in place.
- Administration of Medication consent is obtained and available for each child.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the following:

- Heater on the wall.
- Coded lock on gate.
- Risk assessment recorded.
- Order forms for aprons and gloves.
- Cleaning schedules conducted.
- Swing bin.
- Children's lunches stored in a fridge.
- Children's Admission Form.
- Fire Drill completed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has not provided evidence to demonstrate that the Garda Vetting for two staff members had not been renewed. This remains outstanding.

The registered provider submitted adequate evidence to indicate the remaining non-compliances have been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) A written record was not available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was on 09/01/2024.

(b) An up-to-date record was not maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced in April 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a) Fire drills are now conducted on a monthly basis.

(b) The fire extinguisher and smoke alarms have been serviced.

The registered provider will ensure that fire drills are completed on a monthly basis and that the fire extinguisher and smoke alarm are serviced on a yearly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire Drill for month of November 2025.

Maintenance record for fire extinguisher and smoke alarm.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 22 children at any one time attending the service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 29/11/2024 to the 27/11/2025.